THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI DAYANIDHI MARAN): (a) to (c) With the expansion of subscriber base, mobile networks are to be upgraded by various service providers to meet Quality of Service (QoS) standards. This is a continuous process in terms of reengineering of network by addition of more Base Transceivers Station (BTS), adopting techniques such as installation of boosters and adoption of micro cell architecture. It is noticed that network upgradation exercise is not commensurate with the increase in subscriber base which *inter-alia* include installation of additional BTS.

The Government has also taken steps to simplify procedures for clearance of sites for installation of towers apart from releasing more spectrum by co-ordination with existing users.

Draft maritime policy

*33. SHRI C. PERUMAL: Will the Minister of SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether draft maritime policy was circulated for suggestions and opinion;

(b) whether Water Transport Workers Federation of India has opposed the policy on the ground that the large scale induction of private sector in ports would weaker the country's sovereignty and independence; and

(c) if so, the steps taken to address the issues?

THE MINISTER OF SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS (SHRI T.R. BAALU): (a) and (b) The Department of Shipping has elicited response from various stakeholders on the draft Policy for the Maritime Sector (Ports, Merchant Shipping and IWT) through a process of consultation including circulation of the draft Policy, interactive sessions with stakeholders and display of the draft policy on its website. While submitting its suggestions on the draft Policy, interactive sessions with stakeholders and display of the draft policy Water Transport Workers' Federation of India has, *inter alia,* commented that both Shipping and Port Sectors in India are under the control of foreign shipping interests and that the Maritime Policy must endeavour to change the situation by evolving appropriate policies.

(c) The Government is fully committed to protecting the interests of the Indian maritime sector. Participation of the private sector in the major

ports is permitted on a case to case basis after careful consideration of all relevant factors. Institutional mechanisms have been put in place to ensure that selection of the private operator is made after thorough scrutiny of his credentials.

Prime Minister's talks with Pakistan President

*34. SHRI ABU ASIM AZMI: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Prime Minister had a telephonic conversation with the President of Pakistan and asked him to stop the terrorist activities in India from Pakistan;

(b) if so, whether it is also a fact that the President of Pakistan asked the Prime Minister to intimate the proofs in this regard; and

(c) Government's reaction in the regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI E. AHAMMED): (a) to (c) In a telephonic conversation with President Musharraf of Pakistan, who rang PM on 31 October 2005 to express condolences for the victims of the serial bomb blasts in New Delhi on 29 October, PM told the President of Pakistan that the country was outraged at these heinous acts of terrorism. PM again drew President Musharraf's attention to Pakistan's commitment to end cross-border terrorism and said that India continues to be disturbed and dismayed at indications of the external linkages of terrorist groups in regard to the October 29 bombing. PM said India expects Pakistan to act against terrorism directed at India consistent with its commitment that no territory under its control would be used for terrorist activity directed against India.

President Musharraf said the blasts should be investigated and that action would be taken against those responsible.

Implementation of minimum wages

*35. SHRI V. NARAYANASAMY: Will the Minister of LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Supreme Court has held recently that 'equal pay for equal work' is not for the daily wage earners; and